

Troubled priest hires attorney Jennings

Smith owes millions in sex-abuse case

By BETH MILLER
The News Journal

The Rev. Edward J. Smith, the Norbertine priest against whom a federal jury awarded \$41 million in damages to an alleged victim of child sexual abuse last month, has hired Wilmington attorney Kathleen Jennings to represent him.

Attorneys for Navy Cmdr. Kenneth J. Whitwell, who said Smith abused him while he was a student at Archmere Academy, reported difficulty locating Smith earlier this month. Attorney Thomas S. Neuberger said his process server had not been able to locate the priest at the Norbertine priory in Middletown where order officials had said he lived, or at his late mother's Philadelphia row house.



The Rev. Edward J. Smith's whereabouts are still unknown.

Eventually, the papers were served on the order's superior, the Rev. James Bagnato.

Jennings said Tuesday she is in contact with Smith, 60, and has accepted legal documents on his behalf. She would not say where Smith is living.

Whitwell sued Smith, alleging that the former Archmere Academy faculty member had sexually abused him more than 200 times over a 33-month period while Whitwell was a student at the school. Whitwell graduated from Archmere in 1986.

Smith did not respond to the suit and did not appear in U.S. District Court, where a jury awarded Whitwell \$6 million in compensatory damages and \$35 million in punitive damages.

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Navy Cmdr. Kenneth J. Whitwell said he was abused at Archmere Academy.

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